

COMMEMORATING THE GREEK
REVOLUTION OF 1821

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the Greek Revolution of 1821, which marked the beginning of a protracted struggle fought and eventually won by a people firmly committed to achieving freedom for themselves and liberation for their country.

It is a day that bears personal significance to—and instills pride in—generations of Greek Americans, who still feel a strong sense of nationalism toward Greece even though they or their ancestors may have moved away long ago.

Furthermore, irrespective of ethnicity, I believe it is a day of particular importance to all Americans, as we share a special kinship with the people of Greece. Whenever we promote democracy, civil liberties, and the principles of self-determination, we pay testament to our countries' shared values.

Mr. Speaker, on this occasion, I also rise to welcome the honorable Mayor of Messina, Messina, Greece, Christos Christopoulos, to the City of Peabody. On March 23, 2005, in a gesture of solidarity, Mayor Christopoulos and Peabody's Mayor Michael Bonfanti signed a sister-city pact. I extend my congratulations to the mayors, the Saint Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church community, and all Greek Americans of Peabody, many of whom descend from Messina, on this important event.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF ALDERWOMAN HILDA
CALVILLO

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Alderwoman Hilda Calvillo for her public service to the city of Charlotte, Texas.

Hilda Calvillo was born, raised, and educated in the city of Charlotte. As an active participant in local events, she understands the specific needs of her community.

As the first woman to ever be elected, Mrs. Calvillo has served in her city as Alderwoman since 1999. She spends much of her time working in school functions and focusing on local community projects. Having graduated from local schools, she works passionately to ensure that quality education is kept a priority.

Also working to keep our communities beautiful, Hilda Calvillo has recently been instrumental in the recent building of a Charlotte city park.

Hilda Calvillo lives in Charlotte with her husband. She has three children and two grandchildren. Mrs. Calvillo and her family enjoy sports and spending time with the rest of the community.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply proud to have this opportunity to recognize Alderwoman Hilda Calvillo of Charlotte for her dedicated public service.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF ALDERMAN BUDDY LEE
DAUGHTRY

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize alderman Buddy Lee Daughtry for his public service to the city of Charlotte, Texas.

Buddy Lee Daughtry is a hard working alderman in the City of Charlotte. Raised on a small farm, Mr. Daughtry is a family man who continues to help his parents whenever the need arises. While in high school he won numerous awards in science, and later graduated from Charlotte ISD.

Working for the prison system, Buddy Lee Daughtry works tirelessly to keep our streets safe. He has served the city of Charlotte as Alderman for the past eight years and has been involved in numerous local programs. It is important to recognize the contributions of citizens like Buddy Lee Daughtry. Their hard work has vastly improved our local communities.

Buddy Lee Daughtry lives with his wife Karen in Charlotte and enjoys spending time with his family. Their daughter studies at A&M Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply proud to have this opportunity to recognize Alderman Buddy Lee Daughtry of Charlotte for his dedicated public service.

SIKHS ABOUT TO CELEBRATE
VAISAKHI DAY

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, April 13, which is the birthday of Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, is Vaisakhi Day for the Sikhs. I wish all the Sikhs around the world a happy Vaisakhi Day.

Vaisakhi Day is the anniversary of the day in 1699 when Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the ten Sikh Gurus, created the Khalsa Panth. At that time, he said, "I give sovereignty to the humble Sikhs." Yet over 300 years later, they still struggle for that sovereignty while they suffer under severe repression from "the world's largest democracy."

More than 250,000 Sikhs have been murdered at the hands of the Indian government, according to figures compiled by the Punjab State Magistracy. The Movement Against State Repression reports that 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners under the repressive TADA law. How can this happen in a democracy?

Sikhs have an opportunity this Vaisakhi Day to reclaim their sovereignty. In January, 35 Sikhs were arrested for simply raising the Sikh flag and making speeches in support of Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence on October 7, 1987. Political leaders are coming out for Khalistan. All of India's efforts to suppress the Sikhs sovereignty movement have just given it new life.

What can we do to support this worthy cause? We should stop our aid and trade with

India as long as it continues to kill ethnic minorities, hold political prisoners, and engage in other wholesale violations of the most basic human rights. We should go on record in support of self-determination in the form of a free and fair plebiscite on independence in Khalistan, in Kashmir, in Nagaland, and wherever the people are seeking freedom. These measures will help bring a new glow of freedom to all people in the subcontinent.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to place the Council of Khalistan's Vaisakhi Day message into the RECORD for the information of my colleagues.

VAISAKHI DAY SHOULD BE CELEBRATED IN
FREEDOM

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family and friends and all Sikhs a Happy Vaisakhi Day. As you know, Vaisakhi Day is the anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa. On Vaisakhi Day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh baptized the Sikhs and required them to keep the five Ks. He made the Sikhs into saints and soldiers, giving the blessing "In grieb Sikhin ko deon Patshahi" ("I give sovereignty to the humble Sikhs.") Just two years after his departure from this earthly plane in 1708, the Sikhs established our own independent state in Punjab.

Today we struggle to regain the sovereignty that Guru Gobind Singh bestowed upon us over 300 years ago. Yet the Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Joginder Singh Vedanti, was quoted as saying that "We don't want a separate territory." Does Jathedar Vedanti, like every other Sikh, pray "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa" ("the Khalsa shall rule") every morning and evening? Has he forgotten our heritage of freedom? How can the spiritual leader of the Sikh religion deny the Sikh Nation's legitimate aspiration for freedom and sovereignty? Is he not stung by the words of one of his predecessors, former AkalTakht Jathedar Professor Darshan Singh, who said, "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh"? Is Akal Takht occupied by a person who does not believe in Sikh values and Sikh aspirations?

The flame of freedom continues to burn brightly in the heart of the Sikh Nation. No force can suppress it. On Republic Day, Sikh leaders raised the Sikh flag in Amritsar and made speeches in support of Khalistan. 35 Sikhs were arrested for raising the Kesri Nishan. Eleven of them continue to be held and they have been denied bail. Is this the freedom that Guru Gobind Singh bestowed upon us? Is this the "glow of freedom" that Nehru promised us when Master Tara Singh and the Sikh leaders of the time chose to take our share with India?

Punjab's Chief Minister, Captain Amarinder Singh, was declared a hero of the Sikh Nation for asserting Punjab's sovereignty and preserving Punjab's natural resource, its river water, for the use of Punjab farmers by cancelling Punjab's water agreements. In so doing, Amarinder Singh and the Legislative Assembly explicitly declared the sovereignty of the state of Punjab. In December former Member of Parliament Simranjit Singh Mann again reverted to public support of Khalistan. He pledged that his party will lead a peaceful movement to liberate Khalistan. Obviously, Mr. Mann is aware of the rising support of our cause. Mann joins Sardar Atinder Pal Singh, Sardar D.S. Gill of the International Human Rights Organization, and other Sikh leaders in Punjab in supporting freedom for Khalistan openly. Jagjit Singh, President of Dal Khalsa, was quoted in the Deccan Herald as saying that "the Indian government can never suppress the movement. Sikh aspirations can only be met when they have a separate state." There is no other choice for the

Sikh nation but a sovereign, independent Khalistan. Every Sikh leader must come out openly for Khalistan. We salute those Sikh leaders in Punjab who have done so.

Any organization that sincerely supports Khalistan deserves the support of the Sikh Nation. However, the Sikh Nation needs leadership that is honest, sincere, consistent, and dedicated to the cause of Sikh freedom. Leaders like Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan, Harchand Singh Longowal, Didar Bains, Ganga Singh Dhillon, the Akali Dal leadership, and others who were complicit in the attack on the Golden Temple cannot be trusted by the Sikh Nation. The evidence against them is clear in Chakravayuh: Web of Indian Secularism. The Sikh Nation cannot believe that these leaders will not betray the cause of Khalistan, just as they betrayed the Sikh Nation in 1984. We must be careful if we are to continue to move the cause of freedom for Khalistan forward in 2005 as we did in 2004.

The Akali Dal conspired with the Indian government in 1984 to invade the Golden Temple to murder Sant Bhindranwale and 20,000 other Sikh during June 1984 in Punjab. Even the Pope spoke out strongly against this invasion and desecration of our most sacred shrine. How can these so-called Sikh leaders connive with the people who carried it out? If Sikhs will not even protect the sanctity of the Golden Temple, how can the Sikh Nation survive as a nation?

The Akali Dal has lost all its credibility. The Badal government was so corrupt openly and no Akali leader would come forward and tell Badal and his wife to stop this unparalleled corruption.

If Jathedar Vedanti opposes freedom and sovereignty for the Sikh Nation, then he is not fit to sit in Akal Takht, in the seat of the Khalsa Panth. The Sikh Nation should have a Jathedar who is committed to sovereignty.

The Council of Khalistan has stood strongly and consistently for liberating our homeland, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. For over 18 years we have led this fight while others were trying to divert the resources and the attention of the Sikh Nation away from the issue of freedom in a sovereign, independent Khalistan. Khalistan is the only way that Sikhs will be able to live in freedom, peace, prosperity, and dignity. It is time to start a Shantmai Morcha to liberate Khalistan from Indian occupation.

The Akal Takht Sahib and Darbar Sahib are under the control of the Indian government, the same Indian government that has murdered more than a quarter of a million Sikhs in the past twenty years. The Jathedar of the Akal Takht and the head granthi of Darbar Sahib toe the line that the Indian government tells them. They are not appointed by the Khalsa Panth. Otherwise they would behave like a real Jathedar, Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke, rather than like Indian government puppet Jathedar Aroor Singh, who gave a Siropa to General Dyer for the massacre of Sikhs and others at Jallianwala Bagh. These institutions will remain under the control of the Indian regime until we free the Sikh homeland, Punjab, Khalistan, from Indian occupation and oppression and sever our relations with the New Delhi government.

The Sikhs in Punjab have suffered enormous repression at the hands of the Indian regime in the last 25 years. Over 50,000 Sikh youth were picked up from their houses, tortured, murdered in police custody, then secretly cremated as "unidentified bodies." Their remains were never even given to their families! Another 52,268 are being held as political prisoners. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! Even now, the capital of Punjab, Chandigarh, has not been handed

over to Punjab, but remains a Union Territory. How can Sikhs have any freedom living under a government that would do these things?

Sikhs will never get any justice from Delhi. The leaders in Delhi are only interested in imposing Hindu sovereignty over all the minorities to advance their own careers and their own power. Ever since independence, India has mistreated the Sikh Nation, starting with Patel's memo labelling Sikhs "a criminal tribe." What a shame for Home Minister Patel and the Indian government to issue this memorandum when the Sikh Nation gave over 80 percent of the sacrifices to free India.

How can Sikhs continue to live in such a country? There is no place for Sikhs in supposedly secular, supposedly democratic India. Let us make Viasakhi Day a day of freedom. Let us dedicate ourselves this Vaisakhi Day to living up to the blessing of Guru Gobind Singh. Let us take the occasion of Vaisakhi Day to begin to shake ourselves loose from the yoke of Indian oppression and liberate our homeland, Khalistan, so that all Sikhs may live lives of prosperity, freedom, and dignity.

IN RECOGNITION OF MRS. BETH FREEMAN

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished public servant of Alabama's Third Congressional District.

Mrs. Beth Freeman, hired just two months after she turned 18, has worked for the people of Alabama for more than 30 years. Over her career she has progressed from answering phones and clipping newspaper articles to handling nearly every issue addressed by the Federal government, from military affairs to Social Security.

She has been a faithful and non-partisan public servant, having served with the four most recent officials representing this office, including the late Congressman Bill Nichols; Congressman Glenn Browder; and then-Congressman Riley.

While I have only known 'Ms. Beth' since taking office in 2002, in that short time I have developed a deep appreciation for her hard work and dedication to the people of Alabama. Families and seniors across this district have called upon her expertise for years, and relied upon her persistence to get their problems solved. She will be missed here in this office, and across East Alabama.

Beth, on behalf of the citizens of Alabama's Third Congressional District, thank you for your service to our state. We wish you all the best in your retirement.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE HON. HOWELL HEFLIN

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 6, 2005

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, the entire state of Alabama recently lost a dear friend, and I

rise today to honor him and pay tribute to his memory.

Senator Howell Heflin was a devoted family man and dedicated public servant throughout his entire life, someone who devoted nearly a quarter-century in public service to the residents of Alabama.

Born on June 19, 1921, the son of Reverend and Mrs. Marvin Heflin, Senator Heflin was a native of Poulan, Georgia, and spent his childhood moving from one Alabama community to another before his family settled in Colbert County. He was a 1942 graduate of Birmingham-Southern College. Within a short time following his graduation, he joined the United States Marine Corps and served during World War II in the Pacific Theater of Operations. He was wounded twice during his service and was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action before being discharged in 1946. Following the completion of his military obligations, he enrolled in the law school at the University of Alabama and graduated from that institution in 1948.

From 1948 until 1970, Senator Heflin worked as a prosecuting attorney in the City of Tusculum before winning election as Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court. For the next six years, he served with distinction on the court and is known for many accomplishments during that time, including implementing large reforms of the state court system that eliminated years of backlogged cases. He earned so much respect for his work as Chief Justice that, even after having been elected to the United States Senate, friends, colleagues, and admirers continued to refer to him as "The Judge."

First elected to the Senate in 1978, Senator Heflin served with distinction for 18 years and ably represented the interests of all Alabamians. During his three terms, he served most notably as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and as both chairman and vice chairman of the Senate Ethics Committee, a position he held for 12 years. Additionally, he served as a member of that body's Agriculture Committee and was a strong and able advocate for the interests of Alabama's agricultural community.

During his three terms in Congress, Senator Heflin developed a reputation of working with his colleagues to find common ground on numerous issues, and always with the best interests of his constituents at heart. Many times, he put partisanship aside to support issues for which he saw great benefit, but which others were actively working to oppose. And while his personal views tended towards the conservative end of the spectrum on defense and financial matters, he was more progressive on social issues. In fact, two African-American federal judges from Alabama, U.W. Clemon of Birmingham and Myron Thompson of Montgomery, were both championed by Senator Heflin.

In an article appearing in the Mobile Register following the senator's death, former Alabama Congressman Sonny Callahan was quoted as saying, "He was always there for us when we needed him. We had common goals for Alabama and worked towards those goals." Perhaps these words more than many others spoken in the days following his passing are an accurate summation of the tremendous work completed during his long career and of the faith and trust he in turn earned from his constituents.